

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ROME 002269

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/ENV HAROLD FOSTER, RICK DRISCOLL
EB FOR HANS KLEMM; IO/EDA FOR WINNICK AND KOTOK
GENEVA FOR HOHMAN
NAIROBI FOR UNEP
USDA/FAS FOR BOBBY RICHEY

SENSITIVE

FROM FODAG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AORC](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#) [SENV](#) [WFP](#) [WHO](#)

SUBJECT: WHO LETTER ON GMO'S: CARTAGENA PROTOCOL
CONFUSION

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) DIRECTOR GENERAL REVEALED THAT THE WHO DIRECTOR GENERAL IS MISINFORMED CONCERNING THE ADVANCE INFORMED AGREEMENT PROVISION OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL. IN URGING WFP TO "OPERATE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE PROTOCOL" AND "INFORM IMPORTING COUNTRIES OF THE NATURE OF CONSIGNMENTS," DIRECTOR GENERAL BRUNT LAND IS ECHOING EUROPEAN COMMENTS MADE AT THE LAST WFP BOARD MEETING ON THIS SUBJECT. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) MISSION HAS BEEN INFO'ED (PLEASE PROTECT) ON A LETTER FROM WHO DIRECTOR GENERAL (DG) BRUNT LAND TO WFP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MORRIS ON THE SUBJECT OF GMO FOOD AID. THE LETTER, REPEATED BELOW IN ITS ENTIRETY, SHOWS THAT THE WHO DG IS MISINFORMED CONCERNING THE ADVANCE INFORMED AGREEMENT PROVISION OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL (WHICH DOES NOT APPLY TO SHIPMENTS OF FOOD OR FEED). FURTHERMORE, IN URGING WFP TO "OPERATE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE PROTOCOL" AND "INFORM IMPORTING COUNTRIES OF THE NATURE OF CONSIGNMENTS," DIRECTOR GENERAL BRUNT LAND IS PROVIDING AN INTERPRETATION -- IN ADVANCE OF ENTRY INTO FORCE, AND A DECISION BY THE STATES PARTIES -- OF ARTICLE 18.2 (A) WHICH STATES THAT EACH PARTY SHALL TAKE MEASURES TO REQUIRE THAT DOCUMENTATION ACCOMPANYING LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS (LMO'S) INTENDED FOR DIRECT USE AS FOOD OR FEED, OR FOR PROCESSING, CLEARLY IDENTIFY THAT THEY MAY CONTAIN LMO'S AND ARE NOT INTENDED FOR INTENTIONAL INTRODUCTION INTO THE ENVIRONMENT.

13. (SBU) COMMENT: THE WHO DG'S STATEMENT IS ALMOST IDENTICAL TO VIEWS EXPRESSED BY EUROPEAN UNION MEMBERS AT THE LAST WFP BOARD MEETING ON THIS SUBJECT. THE LETTER PERPETUATES MISINFORMATION CONCERNING WHAT WILL AND WILL NOT BE REQUIRED BY THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL (ONCE IT ENTERS INTO FORCE). END COMMENT.

14. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT OF LETTER:

DEAR MR. MORRIS,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER DATED 10 APRIL 2003. I APPRECIATE IT THAT YOU KEPT ME INFORMED ON DEVELOPMENTS EMANATING FROM THE SOUTHERN AFRICA CRISIS.

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND WFP FOR PREPARING A POLICY DOCUMENT ON FOOD AID THAT MAY CONTAIN GM MATERIAL. IN MY VIEW THE STATEMENT IS CAREFULLY DRAFTED. WFP STATES THAT FOOD DONATIONS MUST ADHERE TO INTERNATIONALLY AGREED STANDARDS THAT APPLY TO FOOD IN TRADE. THIS CERTAINLY WILL INCLUDE CODEX STANDARDS, AIMING AT THE PROTECTION OF THE HEALTH OF CONSUMERS. I SHARE YOUR POSITION THAT WFP CANNOT IMPOSE PROVISIONS OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON COUNTRIES NOT BEING SIGNATORIES OF THAT PROTOCOL. IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, THIS MAY HAVE SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES.

A KEY ELEMENT IN THE PROTOCOL IS THE PRINCIPLE OF THE ADVANCE INFORMED AGREEMENT (AIA). EXPORTING COUNTRIES HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO INFORM IMPORTING COUNTRIES ON THE NATURE OF CONSIGNMENTS. IN PARTICULAR IN THE CASE OF GM FOOD THIS IS A RELEVANT PROVISION AS WE HAVE SEEN LAST YEAR WHEN GM FOOD AID WAS PROVIDED BY WFP TO SEVERAL COUNTRIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. ALTHOUGH WFP CANNOT IMPOSE THE PROTOCOL ON COUNTRIES, THE QUESTION RISES WHETHER NEVERTHELESS THE WFP WILL BE ABLE TO OPERATE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE PROTOCOL. THIS IMPLIES THE GMO NATURE OF FOOD AID HAS TO BE KNOWN TO ALLOW YOUR COUNTRY OFFICES TO WORK AS INDICATED IN THE STATEMENT.

I THOUGHT IT APPROPRIATE TO BRING THIS TO YOUR ATTENTION. I WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE COOPERATION OF OUR ORGANIZATIONS IN THIS AREA.

END TEXT OF LETTER. TAMLYN

NNNN

2003ROME02269 - Classification: UNCLASSIFIED